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This resume of an interim report discusses a university preparatory program for Israeli soldiers of Islamic (Sephardic) origin. The Israeli Defense Forces identify and select the candidates, who must be of Sephardic, low socioeconomic status background and have certificates from academic or vocational high schools. The chosen students are soldiers in every sense except that their duty is to study. The candidates are enrolled in an enrichment program which prepares them for the entrance examinations for either the engineering and science program at the Haifa Technion, or for the various universities. The soldiers are discharged from service after they have taken their examinations. The program's success may be noted by the 90-95 percent of the candidates who gained admission to the Technion or to the universities with competitive admission requirements. The enrichment program seems to have increased the academic achievement of the Technion students but a longer preparatory program seems to be needed for success in science and engineering courses. Retention and graduation rates are high. (NH)

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A COMPENSATORY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION LEVEL FOR A CULTURALLY DEPRIVED GROUP IN ISRAEL*

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*This paper was presented at the 1968 AERA Convention in Chicago.

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February 8, 1968

Unforeseen problems have delayed the publication of the final manuscript of the interim report prepared for the convention. Attached is a brief resume. Those interested in the final report are requested to send the following form to A. Perlberg.

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Please send me a copy of your report entitled "A Compensatory Educational Program on the Higher Education Level for a Culturally Deprived Group in Israel."

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R E S U M E

A COMPENSATORY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION LEVEL FOR A CULTURALLY DEPRIVED GROUP IN ISRAEL--AN INTERIM REPORT

Arye Perlberg and Yael Rcm

Rational

The mass immigration to Israel of over a million and a quarter people over a period of 20 years has caused many problems in all phases of life for both the Israelis and the immigrants. Some of these problems are due to the cultural, educational and economic differences between the "old timers," the immigrants from European countries, and the immigrants from countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia; i.e., immigrants from Islamic countries who are commonly referred to as "Sephardic" Jews.* The amalgamation of people who come from over 80 countries, speak many different languages and dialects, and represent layers of culture ranging from the most primitive to the most sophisticated, was and still is one of the major problems facing the state of Israel.

To cope with these problems Israel was embarked upon many programs aimed to absorb and integrate the new immigrants and to compensate culturally deprived and disadvantaged groups.

This study evaluates one of these programs--a university preparatory program for soldiers whose families emigrated from Islamic countries. The program was established in February 1963 by the joint efforts of the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the Israeli Defense Forces (I.D.F.), the Ministry of Education and Culture and the financial aid of several philantropists who are also "Sephardic" Jews.

The stated purpose of the program was to increase the chances of admittance to institutes of higher learning (I.H.L.) for "Sephardic" students. It was also assumed that this program would strengthen their general academic foundation, thus improving their chances to graduate. The ultimate purpose of the initiators of the program was to increase the number of professionals and to form a highly educated political, cultural and economic elite of "Sephardic" Jews.

The program

The program's functions are analyzed in its two phases: (a) Identification and selection and (b) curriculum and instruction.

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*"Sephardic" Jews also come from Balkan countries (Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey) and the term is also used to include Yemenite Jews. "Sephardic" originates from the word "Sefharad" (Spain) and refers to Jewish people whose ancestors lived in Spain, Southern France and Italy during the Middle Ages.

Identification and selection

The Israeli Defense Forces' main role in this program is the identification and selection of candidates. Each year the I.D.F. screens the lists of soldiers who are completing their military service and who meet the following criteria:* (1) Immigrants, or sons of immigrants, mainly from Islamic countries, who are "Sephardic" Jews, (2) graduates of academic high schools who hold a matriculation certificate, and graduates of four-year vocational high schools (technical or agricultural) who have taken a comprehensive examination, and (3) low socioeconomic status groups.

All soldiers who meet the first two conditions are notified by personal letter about the program and the opportunities it offers them. Those interested complete several questionnaires which are sent to a screening committee for evaluation. This committee interviews the candidates and selects forty-five for the Technion and forty-five for the universities. The results of a battery of psychological tests administered by the I.D.F. at the beginning of the Military Service are also considered during the selection.

The program begins every year on February 1 and continues for seven to eight months. Two classes, one in Haifa preparing candidates for (the engineering and science departments) at the Technion, and one in Jerusalem preparing candidates for studies at the various universities are available.

The participants receive complete board and lodging from the I.D.F. They live in military barracks in Army camps, wear military uniforms and receive pay and other services available to the Armed Forces. They are soldiers in every respect but one: Their duty is to study. Every morning they are transported from the barracks to the campuses where they engage in group and individual learning. They enjoy the facilities given to all regular students.

Curriculum and instruction

The main purpose of the Technion's program is to enhance the chances of its participants to succeed in the competitive examinations in mathematics and physics and therefore, the emphasis is on these subjects. A weekly course of study consists of eight hours (four of lecture and four of exercise) in each of the two subjects with four additional hours in each subject of tutorials for those candidates who need it. Other enrichment courses are chemistry (three hours), Hebrew (four hours), English (four hours), History (three hours), and Geography (two hours). In addition to the thirty-two hours per week spent in the classroom, the students are expected to devote a significant amount of time to homework. There are also organized extracurricular activities such as attending concerts, theater, and lectures on various subjects.

*Defined in 1963, when the enrichment program started.

At the Hebrew University, because of the divergence of areas in which the students choose to specialize, the curriculum is much more diversified. Two core curricula were developed; one for those intending to study the sciences and medicine, and one for those who choose social studies, the arts and humanities. The students in these two main groups divide into smaller groups to prepare themselves for the requirements of departments that have competitive entrance examinations.

The instructors in the program are faculty members assigned specifically for this function. I.D.F. officers who are graduates of I.H.L., who serve as commanding officers of the group, are also available for tutoring as part of their duties.

After taking the entrance examinations for their advanced studies the participants are discharged from the I.D.F. When the results of the examinations come through, they are free to enroll in the institutes but not obliged to do so.

Evaluation

This evaluation is part of a comprehensive long-range study. It is intended to investigate such problems as identification, selection, procedures, instruments, academic and nonacademic growth, the problem of dropouts from the program and institutes, and social acceptance and attitudes towards the program. Special attention will be given to the role of the I.D.F. in the program. The following are some of the interim findings in the areas of (a) Identification and Selection, (b) Admittance to Institutes of Higher Learning, and (c) Academic Achievements in Institutes of Higher Learning.

a. Identification and selection. The analysis of identification and selection procedures on the one hand, and the demographic and academic profile of participants on the other hand, leads us to believe that information about the existence of the program and its implications for continuation of studies in higher education were not disseminated enough among potential candidates. As a result, the number of candidates from which participants were selected was limited and the participants did not always meet the required criteria. Only 25 percent of the potential candidates who were invited to submit their candidacy for the program did so. There seem to be several reasons for the small number of candidates: (1) lack of or weak achievement motivation, (2) incomplete matriculation certificates and comprehensive examinations, and (3) social and economic problems at home.

As a result of the present evaluation, the I.D.F. has already changed some of the procedures for identification, screening and selection in order to increase the number of interested and suitable candidates.

b. Admittance to institutes of higher learning. The high percentage of candidates admitted to institutes of higher learning is the first measure of the program's success. At the Technion, 90 percent to 95 percent were admitted compared to 50 percent of the whole population of candidates, and about the same percentage were admitted to the universities in faculties that require competitive

entrance examinations. Out of 396 candidates admitted to the program in the five years it has been in existence, 346 finished the preparatory courses; i.e., met all the requirements of the enrichment program. Of these 346, 316 were admitted to the Technion and the universities (Table 1).

Table 1.--Population of Participants in Enrichment Program

Population Screened										
Class No.	Year	Accepted to Program			Finished Program			Admitted to I.H.L.		
		Tech.	H.U.	Total	Tech.	H.U.	Total	Tech.	H.U.	Total
1	1963	38	33	71	35	32	67	32	32	64
2	1964	37	34	71	34	28	62	30	24	54
3	1965	41	34	75	33	24	57	30	19	49
4	1966	45	44	89	40	39	79	37	39	76
5	1967	45	45	90	42	39	81	37	36	73
	Total	206	190	396	184	162	346	166	150	316

Table 1 describes the distribution of the participants in the program. As seen from the table, five groups have finished the program. The sixth started February 1, with 45 students at the Technion and 46 at the Hebrew University.

c. Academic achievements in institutes of higher learning. Fifty percent of the first graduating class at the Hebrew University achieved a grade of B or better in all subjects and have already started their graduate studies. At the Technion 25 percent of the students from all four groups are in the upper half of their classes, although they were not superior students in high school. It would seem that the enrichment program boosted the achievements of this sub-group from predicted low to above average. As for the rest, the main achievement of the program is that the participants do not drop out, and based on their achievements to date it is predicted that they will graduate in due time.

Learning difficulties have developed in freshmen and sophomore years and additional tutoring to groups and individuals was essential in order to bring first-year students to the minimum level of achievement in the Technion. It would seem that the preparatory program of seven months was not sufficiently intense to prepare some of the students to cope with a rigorous system of study in science and engineering, and that in some cases tutoring will have to be continued in the second and maybe even in the third year of study.

Another qualitative measure is the number of students who will finish their academic studies. Since the program started five years ago, only the first group has graduated: 18 at the Technion and 20 at the Hebrew University. Although the members of the other four groups are still studying, we can predict that most of them will graduate (Tables 2a and 2b).

Table 2a.--Students in Technion, November 1967

Class No.	Academic Year	Admitted	Dropouts	Repeaters	Regular Students	Graduates
1	1963/64	32	9	5	--	18
2	1964/65	30	5	9	16	--
3	1965/66	30	4	6	20	--
4	1966/67	37	1	--	36	--
5	1967/68	37	--	--	--	--
	Total	166	19	20	108	18

Table 2b.--Students in Universities, November 1967

Class No.	Academic Year	Admitted	Dropouts	Regular Students	Graduates	In Graduate School
1	1963/64	32	7	5	20	9
2	1964/65	24	2	22	--	--
3	1965/66	19	--	19	--	--
4	1966/67	39	1	38	--	--
5	1967/68	36	--	36	--	--
	Total	150	10	120	20	9

Although there exist only interim evaluations of the program, those in charge are convinced that it represents an important facet among the many programs designed to compensate culturally deprived groups. The interim report presented here is the first report of the research evaluating the first five years of the program. Its conclusions and recommendations were already instrumental in modifying certain aspects of the program for a new group which started studying at the Technion in February 1968.

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